

## INTRO

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**Jess Brough:** Welcome to Before the Applause - an audio programme for hybrid arts festival Fringe of Colour Films. We are going to be hearing from the filmmakers and artists who are behind the films in this year's festival programme. Some of these films will make you laugh, many will challenge you, and others will be thoroughly dismantling in their ability to find their way straight to your heart. Please enjoy hearing from the people behind these remarkable films and this continuation of their stories.

## DIALOGUE

**Dami Sainz Edwards:** My name is Dami Sainz Edwards. I'm a Caribbean filmmaker, and visual artist, and I'm the creative director, editor of the short film, Batería, which is a documentary film on queer spaces. For me, it's a very special film, especially because it talks about the invisibility and super visibility dynamics as a tool of how to preserve the lives of queer people, especially gay men in Cuba, in a place where this military, hyper military discourse. It's so present, this hyper masculinity discourse, very repressive masculinity is played in their quotidian life and that brings a lot of homophobia, transphobia. So for a long, long time, queer people, especially gay people have found little mostly in the forest, in ruins, and to hang out, to find each other, to find themselves, also ourselves. And so the films actually not really talk about a very specific space, but it talks about a way of living through this dynamic of invisibility and really finding invisibility as a tool of auto-preservation and to preserve our life, our culture, and to create new ways of living and to imagine new ways of living, transcending these dynamics of homophobia and transphobia and queerphobia within the Cuban regime. And not only in Cuba, but in the world, right? It is also, we have found a lot of beauty, a lot of ways of living, happiness and joy within invisibility. And our ancestors, the enslaved people that were living in Cuba or in Colombia or Dominican Republic, these ancestors found joy escaping from the plantation and being themselves invisible. I'm trying to relate cruising culture with Cimarronaje, Cimarron culture, invisibility politics. That's so important for me. And I wanted to explore that within this aesthetic of ghost-like atmospheres, horror films as a way to talk about all these issues. There's this sequence where this person is talking about how he's surviving all the time to the violence that he has experienced there in Bataría. And I was shocked about the way he was like talking about the violence as something normal, as something that he was expected to experience. And I was amazed about like how we normalise violence and how we normalise violence in the way that we are used to co-exist with the violence and to all the time survive and be surviving, reacting with that violence. He started talking about how he said, but I want to be here because this is my space and this is how, and I love to be here and walk around this space. And I want to, like, in a way, defend it with my desire and all that. And he said, actually, at some point, that's something I put in the film, like, we are still in combat. We are still fighting. The way he said it is like with our desire, with our pleasure, having sex, we are defending ourselves at the same time that we are coexisting with that violence and this dynamic of auto-preserving ourselves through pleasure, through pleasurable experiences against all this violence. I found that so powerful. Our pleasure will, in a way, save us. I cried a lot after that interview, well, that conversation, because it's so, so, so powerful and reminded me that time

when I was there with him talking that connect again with your pleasure, with your desire, with your body, with that inner voice that comes when you experience something, nurture that because that's very powerful for you to survive to this very violent war.

## [FILM CLIP]

In those responses, in those answers, there were a lot of violence. in a place where they could be more safe. And for them, safety was already happiness and joy. But that safety, it's also connecting with some policy, with this idea of security, of putting barbed wires and then from separating us to the world. And we are already separated to the work and I have a lot of conflicts with all this idea. I say, like, you know, I don't agree with this, but it's so important to talk about how we see and how different people see this and in different ways because that adds layers and layers of complexity to the experience that many different people are living within these queer spaces. And for me, actually, when I tried to imagine a place, actually, I was quite related to this idea of having a place, and this more of a, this homonormative place, so we could have a space for us, full of lights, you know, like some kind of a sauna or some kind of a sex club more as the one we have in this capitalist world of homo-normative capitalism. Actually I came to Spain looking for that, like longing for is in a way some kind of construction that the capitalism is like selling us for us to pay and to be in this logic of capitalism. continuously imagine and reimagine and go back to imagination, go back to imagination. No, no, no, no. If you don't feel it, if you don't, if it doesn't feel right, but at the same time, they are telling you that this is the right place. No, do continue reimagining and reimagining and reimagining. I think there is a huge power in imagination.

## OUTRO

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**Jess Brough:** Fringe of Colour Films 2023 takes place from the 23rd to the 29th June, but this audio programme will be available in perpetuity. If you are listening to this before the festival, we hope you can join us either online or in-person in Edinburgh, and if you are listening after the festival, you can stay up-to-date with our work at [fringeofcolour.co.uk](https://fringeofcolour.co.uk). This podcast was brought to you by Fringe of Colour Films, a hybrid arts festival for Black people and People of Colour. This series is presented by me Jess Brough, produced by Halina Rifai and Fringe of Colour, theme music by Xavier LaCroix and is supported by Creative Scotland. Thank you for listening.